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REMARKS

Upon the Present

State of Affairs;

In a LETTER to a

MEMBER

Of the HONOURABLE

House of Commons.

LONDON,

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REMARKS

Some ſhort Remarks upon the preſent State of Affairs; In a Letter to a Member of the Honourable Houſe of *Commons*.

SIR,

YOu deſire me to repeat to you the Subſtance of our laſt Diſcourſe, relating to the preſent State of the Nation; In which I ſhould find ſome Difficulty to comply with you, if the Reaſons, you give, were not too ſtrong to be contended with. But you may be aſſur'd, that your Promiſe to conceal my Name, is not the weakeſt Argument you have us'd, to make me publiſh my Thoughts. For, as Truth has her Credentials writ in her Face, and needs not the Support either of Perſons or Parties, where ſhe meets with ſound Underſtandings: So I would not willingly be oblig'd to *anſwer* every *Fool in his Folly*.

Our Nation is to be conſider'd as a Man that is brought by Diſtempers into an ill Habit of Body. And, to make a right Judgment of our Diſeaſe, we muſt enquire into the Riſe and Progreſs of it. To which end we muſt look back as far as the Reign of King *Charles* the Firſt.

The unhappy Occurrences of thoſe Times put the Nation in a Ferment, that has never ſince been throughly ſettled, and was the Seed from which our preſent Misfortunes are grown. All *England* was divided into Parties, and the Youth of the Nation, that was then ſpringing up, took their firſt Tinctures from their reſpective Factions; which bred a certain Hatred and Animoſity, that grew up with them, and became Natural. Inſomuch that every Man was eſteem'd, not according to his real Value, but according to the Opinion that was held of his Party.

When this Tragedy of the State was wrought up to a *Criſis*, and the Scenes were ſtain'd with Royal Blood; the young Princes were tranſplanted to a Soil wholly improper for 'em. For they fell into the Hands of Miniſters, that wanted neither Wit nor Malice, to make uſe of ſuch a Turn. Who imagin'd, being Maſters of our Source, eaſily to pollute our Streams. And indeed they did it effectually. For when another Turn of Things happily brought in the King, Experience tells us what Foreign Principles and Maxims he unhappily brought in with him.

But being a Prince that valued his Eaſe and Pleaſure above all Conſiderations whatſoever, he never puſh'd his Deſigns farther, than to gratifie his Senſes, and keep fair with all the World. Which made his Miniſters ſtudy Cunning more than Prudence; and all ſorts of Juggling grew univerſally in Faſhion. The Mask was taken off. Honour and Truſt were publickly bought and ſold; and thoſe who had Employments, ſtudy'd more to get Money by 'em, than how to execute 'em well. All this made ſuch a Confuſion of Perſons and Things, that the Diſeaſe of the Body Politick diſpers'd it ſelf though every Part; and the Noble Parts were not the leaſt affected. For the Luxury and Supineſs of the Court (as is uſual in all ſuch Caſes) was attended with an Exceſs of Ill Management. And when the Publick Treaſures were drain'd pretty near the Bottom, the moſt valuable Intereſts, as well as Secrets, of the Nation were ſold to *France*, to ſupport a lazie and ignoble Gallantry. And at the ſame Time the Youth of our Nobility and Gentry were ſent thither to be educated, and learn the Faſhion in their Principles as well as Dreſs. For the Miniſters of *France* were in the Bottom of all this, being as active and plotting, as we were idle and unthinking.

And here I cannot but take Notice of one of the blackeſt Contrivances, that ever perhaps was form'd. A Deſign was laid to bring in Popery among us; and in order to this, 'twas thought neceſſary firſt to remove the Religion we had, that we might afterwards be more capable of receiving a new one. To promote this there wanted neither Precept nor Example, Atheiſm, Irreligion, and Ill Nature (the Fundamental Principles of all Villany) were ſet up by ſome of the keeneſt Wits of the Age (I do not ſay the ſoundeſt) as Principles of Philoſophy; and not ill ſeconded by the Practices of the Court. Don't think I am canting (for you know me to be neither a Bigot, nor a Hypocrite) when I tell you, that no State in the World ever flouriſh'd, where Religion of ſome ſort or other) was not ſeriouſly profeſs'd and publickly countenanc'd; nor indeed can Natural Cauſes, any more than Providence, admit it to be otherwiſe.

But (to return to what I was ſaying) the Principles and Practices of the Court grew at laſt ſo notorious, and the Nation was ſo tir'd with being often trick'd and deceiv'd, that Men of Senſe and Honeſty began to have their Eyes open, and to take ſuch Meaſures as the Occaſion made neceſſary. This reviv'd and fomented the Diviſion between the Court and the Countrey; inſomuch that a Man could not be a Friend to the one, without declaring himſelf an Enemy to the other.

When this unhappy Prince concluded his Reign, the raſh and unſteady Conduct of his Succeſſor was ſo far from ſettling the tottered State, that he quickly drove Things to the laſt Extremities. And of what immediately enſued the Impreſſions are ſtill freſh upon all our Minds.

But now we have a new Scene of Things, and are arriv'd at another *Criſis*, that muſt for ever ruin or confirm the Religion,

Honour, Laws, and Liberties of *England*; A *Criſis*, which if not prudently and nicely manag'd, is likely to prove our laſt. For a ſmall Portion of Experience, and a moderate Knowledge of what has paſs'd in the World (with but a competent Meaſure of Common Senſe) will make it clearly and diſtinctly evident to any Man, that if this Settlement fails, or the *French* Power breaks in upon us, *England* (as a free Nation) is for ever loſt. Which is clearly demonſtrated by reducing the whole Matter to theſe three Points.

Firſt, Either we muſt ſubmit to the Power of *France*. Or,
Secondly, We muſt bring back the late King *James*, which will (in its Conſequences) be much the ſame Thing. Or,
Thirdly, We muſt reſolve vigorouſly to ſupport the preſent Government againſt all its Enemies, Domeſtick and Foreign.

Now as to the Firſt of theſe; No Wiſe or Honeſt Man can ever ſo much as entertain a Thought of ſubmitting to a *French* Power. If we conſider how inhumanly that Prince tyrannizes over his own Native Subjects, and how barbarouſly he tramples upon his New Conqueſts. And in all his Cruelties, and Perſecutions, has no regard either to Merit, Age, or Sex; We muſt be blind not to read our own Doom, if ever we ſhou'd fall under the Weight of his Power. And

Secondly, to think of bringing back the late King *James*, wou'd be ſo few Degrees from Driveling, (unleſs in ſuch as are that way inclined from ill Principles and Deſigns) that we cou'd not take it amiſs, if the Favourites that came in with him, ſhould beg us all for Fools, and ſo enjoy our Eſtates. If ever we ſink into ſuch a ſtupidity, we need not be Conjurers to tell our own Fortunes. Therefore

Thirdly, We muſt reſolve vigorouſly to ſupport the preſent Government againſt all its Enemies Domeſtick and Foreign.

We

We must indeed. And we shall certainly do it, if the Cunning of our False Brethren does not impose upon the Ignorance of our Weak ones. For, not to mention all the different Characters of Men, of which we are at this Time unhappily compos'd, there are two sorts, which, though they seem to sail with the same Wind, steer different Courses: And as much as they agree in their Language and Style, yet have opposite Meanings. At the same Time that the Enemies of our Government are studiously improving all Occasions, to interrupt our wisest Debates, and to dash and perplex our maturest Councils, by hollow Reasonings, pretended Difficulties, and frivolous Enquiries; Our mistaken Friends (I speak as an *English*-man) are unadvisedly led into the same Errors, though with an honester Intention. Now as 'tis impossible to know Men in this general Masquerade, it highly imports a Wise and Honest Man to take his Measures rather from the Nature of Things, than the Countenances of Men; And laying aside all manner of Prejudice or Partiality, diligently to attend the Dictates of Right Reason in so important a Conjuncture.

This wou'd lead Men into clear and untroubled Notions of Things, and secure 'em from being foolishly made the Instruments of their own Destruction. For our Foreign (as well as our Domestick) Adversaries look upon our undiscreet Proceedings, as the best Foundation of all their Hopes; and spare neither Cost, nor Pains, to promote our Heats and Differences. They divert themselves with our Folly, and are pleas'd with the Thoughts of our approaching Ruine. And nothing but a faithful Enquiry into the Nature of Things, with a diligent Attention to the Dictates of Right Reason (as I said before) nothing else can save us. That indeed like an alterative Medicine will correct our ill Humours, and restore us insensibly to a state of Health. 'Twill instruct us how to begin all our Reasonings at the right end; and by equally weighing the Consequences of Things, to give every Consideration it's true Weight and Force. As for Instance,

To

To Reaſon profitably of the Affairs of *England* in ſo perplex'd a Conjuncture as this is, a Man muſt know and conſider well the true Conſtitution of our Government: He muſt purge off the corrupt Notions, he ſuck'd in with his Mother's Milk, and forget what he learn't in the Nurſery, or at School; not be influenc'd in the leaſt with a fondneſs of either Perſons, or Parties. For a Man to oppoſe the Court, and make an Intereſt againſt it, in the Reign of a Juſt and Wiſe Prince (whoſe Intereſts are the ſame with our's) becauſe his Father did it at a time when our Religion, Laws, and Liberties, were viſible ſtruck at; is juſt as if I muſt needs ſuffer a dangerous Operation, becauſe my Father had a Stone in his Bladder. The Intereſt of the Court and the Intereſt of the Country are in Nature the ſame, and a difference between 'em is downright Nonſenſe, unleſs either when the One, or the Other, deſigns an Alteration in the Government; The firſt with a View of Oppreſſion and Tyranny, the latter of a Republick. As for the firſt of theſe; his preſent Majeſty has given us ſuch conſtant and ſenſible Marks of his hearty Concern, and unweary'd Care for the Publick Good, that 'twould be very diſingenious and ungrateful to ſuſpect him; beſides that there is a certain Air of Plainneſs, and Integrity in all his Words and Actions; which are always a ſure Mark of a Generous and Honeſt Mind. Nor cou'd his Intereſts lead him amiſs, if his Inclinations did. And as for the other Deſign, I mean of a Republick, I believe the Experiment that was made in the Reign of King *Charles* the Firſt (tho' attended with a Series of ſtrange Succeſſes) had ſuch diſmal and terrible Conſequences, that all judicious and skilful Men muſt needs conclude ſuch Deſigns to be as unpracticable as they are unjuſt.

The Matter thus ſtated, why ſhould a Diviſion be kept on foot, by which both Parties will certainly ſuffer? I do not love to judge raſhly in any Caſe; but I think we may ſafely conclude here, That whoever promotes or foments any ſuch Deſign (directly or indirectly) muſt needs have ſomething out of order, either in his Head, or in his Heart.

But

But (as you told me, when I had the Honour to discourse with you last) great Complaints are made of the ill Management of the Government: Now (Sir) we must remember, That in all Arts the Instruments are to be consider'd as well as the Work-men. And I am afraid (with all the respect that is due to my Native Country) that we are grown a little rusty with the Luxury and Idleness into which the late Reigns have lull'd us; and our Edges are blunted with an excess of Pleasure and Debauchery. The Youth of our Nobility and Gentry want the Advantages of Education (to make them useful to their King and Countrey) which those of our Enemy's have, who are early instructed as well in all useful Learning, as well as in the Art of War. And (as I remark'd to you before) the pernicious Councils, that took place in the Two last Reigns, have introduc'd such a total Corruption of Persons and Things, as has thrown the Body Politick into an ill Habit; and 'tis not in Nature to be expected, that a perfect Cure can be wrought without a little Time and Patience. But a great many People suspect an ill Management, only for want of Success; not considering from whence Success comes, and that 'tis to be courted, not commanded. Whereas if they were truly inform'd of the great and numerous Difficulties that His Majesty meets with; and with what unweary'd Vigour he renews his Application; when (thro' the Failures of others) his Designs prove unsuccessful; they wou'd be more inclin'd to Admiration than Censure. If any one says, That the making Use of good Instruments depends upon His Majesty; it may be answered, That no Man ought to blame His Choice, without being acquainted with all the Reasons he had for it. If *Solomon* himself cou'd be suppos'd to come among us, in such a confus'd and distracted a Conjuncture as this is, he wou'd be at a loss (for some time) what Measures to take. Upon the whole Matter, I am fully perswaded (and indeed no Thinking Man can be of any other Opinion) That whatever ill Management there has been, His Majesty has done all that was possible (on his part)

to

to prevent it. He is in the same Bottom with us, as *English*-Men, Protestants, and Honest Men; and 'tis a Madness to think that he will not take all possible care of himself and the Nation. And one good Argument (among many others) to convince us of His good Intentions towards us, is, His Asking Advice of the Parliament (in His late Gracious Speech) with so much Heartiness and Sincerity.

In Return to which, it wou'd contribute very much to the Honour, and Credit of Parliaments; and be of infinite Advantage to the Publick, if you wou'd enter upon no unseasonable Debates, nor frivolous Inquiries; but observe in all your Proceedings that Calmness and Solidity that becomes the Dignity of so great a Council. 'Tis good in all Occasions to distinguish between what is Solid, and what is Trivial; but in Affairs of Importance, 'tis of absolute Necessity: For want of distinguishing these Two Things, your Time may be mispent, your best Designs frustrated, and all your Labour lost.

In a word, the Fate of *England* (and of all *Europe*) is before you: You are surrounded with active and subtle Enemies, that will omit no Stratagems, by which 'tis possible to mislead you: You have an Opportunity to be the Instruments of *England*'s Glory and Happiness; which, if lost, can never be recall'd. But if you act Prudently and Sincerely (uninfluenc'd by all sorts of Prejudice) you will lay the Foundation of your own Honour, and your Country's Prosperity.

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